

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present paper, Applicants will have elected, with traverse, the invention defined by claims 1-12, 27, and 28. In the Official Action, the Examiner required an election among Group I defined by claims 1-12, 27, and 28 and Group II defined by claims 13-26.

Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement and submit that it is inappropriate. Applicants note that each and every one of the claims in the present application recites, *inter alia*, an entrance face of an optical fiber.

Additionally, the overwhelming majority of the field of search for the identified groups is co-extensive, such that both of the search classifications identified by the Examiner would likely be searched for each of Groups I and II. Although there may be specific search areas that are required for particular claims that are not required for others, this alone is believed to be inadequate and thus an inappropriate basis for requiring restriction. Since the two groups of claims are so closely related, it is submitted that there is no serious burden on the Examiner in examining all of the claims together.

As set forth in M.P.E.P. §803, "an appropriate explanation" must be set forth by the Examiner as to the existence of a "serious burden" if the restriction requirement were not required. Since the search for the claims would appear to include a significant amount of overlap, it is respectfully submitted that no serious burden would come to bear on the Examiner.

For all of these reasons, and consistent with the Office policy as set forth in M.P.E.P. §803, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider

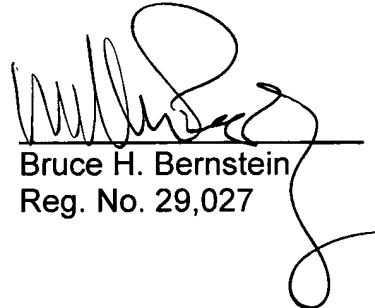
the position taken in the above-mentioned Official Action and withdraw the restriction requirement in the present application. Accordingly, the Examiner's restriction requirement is believed to be improper and has been traversed for the reasons set forth above.

Applicants submit that, in view of the above, it is inappropriate to require Applicants to restrict their invention to one of the two groups of claims, and that it is not burdensome for the Examiner to examine claims 1-28 at least because of the commonality of the claimed subject matter.

Nevertheless, in order to be fully responsive, Applicants have elected with traverse, the invention disclosed in Group I, comprising claims 1-12, 27, and 28, in the event that the Examiner chooses not to reconsider and withdraw the restriction requirement. Notwithstanding, Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application with respect to claims 13-26, should the Examiner choose not to reconsider and withdraw the restriction requirement.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding the present response or this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Masahiro FUSHIMI et al.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce H. Bernstein', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large loop at the end.

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May 6, 2005  
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